

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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expand support to medical centers
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 13 APRIL 5, 2021

Help put SWP on NJ ballot: Give working people a voice

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

UNION CITY, N.J. — A target weekend to campaign and collect signatures to put Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor, and Candace Wagner, for lieutenant governor, on the ballot in New Jersey was a big success March 20-22. The effort boosted the total number of signatures to 831, over half of campaigners' 1,500 goal.

Kuniansky spoke to Jamel Perry, a musician in Irvington, about the need for workers and our unions to fight for jobs, not handouts like the recently adopted government "stimulus" package.

"This is just hush money, they're pacifying us," Perry said. "They tell us you've got to pick the lesser of two evils," referring to the Democratic and Republican parties.

Kuniansky told him the SWP campaign backed actions to demand the prosecution of cops who killed Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky.

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Back Amazon workers in their fight for union!

Vote ends March 29 in Alabama union battle



Reuters/Lucy Nicholson

March 22 AFL-CIO-sponsored rally in Los Angeles mobilized support in fight for union recognition by Amazon workers at Bessemer, Alabama, warehouse. Victory could expand struggle.

BY JANICE LYNN

BESSEMER, Ala. — In the final week of the vote over union representation at the giant Amazon fulfillment center here, solidarity with those fighting for a "yes" vote has picked up. The voting, conducted by mail-in

ballot by the National Labor Relations Board, ends March 29.

Volunteers from throughout the country have been stopping by the office of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union to help with phone banking, canvassing throughout the area, placing pro-union signs on supporters' lawns, producing videos, and texting and talking to workers about how a union can help workers there.

Like all Amazon workers and millions of others across the country, they face dehumanizing production quotas, company surveillance, arbitrary discipline and firings, and the bosses'

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Mass protests in Myanmar challenge to military rule

BY SETH GALINSKY

The military high command in Myanmar is facing a serious challenge, as workers, farmers, fishermen, youth and others keep up their daily protests, and workers strike, aimed at overturning the Feb. 1 coup and freeing political prisoners. Desperate to beat back the protest movement, the junta has stepped up its repression.

"Civilians, striking workers, politicians and more are being violently detained in arbitrary nighttime raids. Then they're taken to undisclosed locations, no family/legal visitation," the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners told the *Militant* via email from Myanmar March 23.

The toll at the hands of the police and some army units has grown to more than 275 dead, 2,800 imprisoned and countless wounded as of March 23.

A nationwide strike by railway workers, bank employees, airline crews, garbage collectors, medical workers, truck drivers, garment workers and others continues. It is "disrupting transport, logistics, banking, commerce," complained the *Financial Times* March 16.

The junta evicted 1,000 rail workers and their families from staff housing in Yangon March 10. On March 20 the regime warned rail workers in Mandalay to return to work within two days or they would be evicted too. "We were in tears as we left our homes," one woman forced out of the Mandalay complex told

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770,000 file for unemployment in one week — Workers need jobs!



UNITE HERE Local 26

Protest in Boston March 23 demanding hotel bosses recall workers they have laid off during COVID-19 pandemic. Nonunion Marriott Copley is one of hundreds of hotels across the country that have thrown large numbers of workers out on the street over the last year.

BY TERRY EVANS

The Joseph Biden Democratic Party administration says it plans to follow up its coronavirus relief package of \$1,400 one-time checks with a swath of proposals it says will transform the country's crumbling infrastructure. This includes building millions of electric car charging stations, increasing reliance on 5G and the internet,

and steps to increase your "micro mobility" — workers using electric bikes and scooters.

But workers confront mass unemployment right now and the central question we face is jobs, to be working alongside co-workers, making an income and being in a position to fight the bosses' ceaseless attacks on our

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Debate over how to answer killings targeting women at Georgia spas

BY LISA POTASH

ATLANTA — On March 16 Robert Aaron Long, a 21-year-old Caucasian, shot and killed eight people at three massage spas, two in Atlanta and one in nearby Cherokee County. Six of the eight people killed were Korean- or Chinese-American women, and two were Caucasian, a man and a woman. A Latino man doing business at the establishment next door to one of the spas was also seriously injured.

After Long was arrested, he told police he had been battling a sex addiction and he had to eliminate the spas he frequented to remove the "temptation." He said that prejudice against Asians had nothing to do with the killings.

Those killed in Cherokee County were Delaina Ashley Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, and Daoyou Feng. Those killed in Atlanta were Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant,

Suncha Kim and Yong Ae Yue.

The cops have charged Long both with murder and "malice murder," which means the killings were premeditated, charges that carry the

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SWP: ‘Give workers a voice’

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She said the looting, vandalism and confrontations organized by leaders of Black Lives Matter and antifa during protests dealt blows to the struggle against cop brutality and discouraged other working people from joining them. Perry agreed and got a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, along with a subscription to the *Militant*.

“Your campaign is for unions?” asked construction worker Jonathan Vega in Phillipsburg, when SWP campaigner Terry Evans knocked on his door in this small town near the Pennsylvania border.

Evans said Kuniansky was using her campaign to build support for the fight for a union at Amazon’s warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. Vega told Evans he had worked for a while as a driver at Amazon. “Workers in the warehouse were treated as robots,” he said.

Vega also worked in construction and was a member of the Heat and Frost Insulators union Local 12 in New York. “I went to rallies the union called,” he said proudly. Evans pointed out the number of workers killed on construction sites in the city had risen for three straight years. “Workers and our unions need to fight to take control of production out of the bosses’ hands,” said Evans. “The bosses’ drive for profits ensures work will not be done safely.”

Vega signed up to put Kuniansky on the ballot and got a subscription to the *Militant*. He said he would show the paper’s coverage of the fight for a union at Amazon’s Bessemer warehouse to workers he is still in touch with in Local 12.

Kuniansky talked with housekeeper Waleska Peron at a Walmart parking lot in Kearny.

Workers ‘are in middle of the storm’

“I’m working a little bit,” Peron told the SWP candidate. “But the people whose house I work at have moved to their other house, so there is not much to do. Workers don’t have that choice. We are in the middle of the storm.”

“Unemployment tears the working class apart,” Kuniansky said. “Workers need to be at work where we can fight side-by-side for better wages and conditions and learn more about our capacities as a class,” she said, pointing to the example set by the Amazon workers fighting for a union. Peron signed to put Kuniansky on the ballot.

During a Militant Labor Forum March 20, Kuniansky described a message of support her Walmart co-worker, Tetri Boodhoo, sent to the Amazon workers. Boodhoo’s husband works at an Amazon warehouse. “She got a thank you note from an organizer for the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union who wrote, ‘Whatever happened in Alabama can happen anywhere. Looking forward to working with you and your husband.’” Now Kuniansky and Boodhoo are discussing what to do next to build support for the unionization drive.

“Last Saturday,” Kuniansky told the meeting, “Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for Manhattan Borough president, and I joined a demonstration in New York City in solidarity with the fight against military rule in Myanmar. We were embraced by the protesters who insisted we march behind their lead banner.”



Militant/Joanne Murphy

“Workers need to fight for jobs, not rely on government ‘stimulus,’” Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of New Jersey, told Jamel Perry, a musician, in Irvington March 20. Perry said, “This is just hush money to try and pacify us.”

The SWP campaign points to the common interests of working people around the world, Kuniansky said.

Alongside the 355 working people who signed petitions during the target weekend, 29 got subscriptions to the *Militant*. Thirteen books on

working-class politics by leaders of the SWP and other revolutionaries were picked up from campaign supporters. To join teams in New Jersey or other states where the SWP campaigns, contact the nearest party branch listed on page 8.

SWP special ‘stimulus’ capital appeal off to strong start

The Socialist Workers Party special “stimulus” capital appeal, for the long-term work of the party, is off to a strong start.

Within a week of the government sending out the first of the most recent “stimulus” payments the fund total is \$24,700 given by 20 contributors from around the country, and growing! Many of the notes sent by contributors are brief, but to the point. “My check is in the mail. Onward!” writes Lisa Potash from Atlanta. From Southern California, Pat Nixon writes, “Enclosed is my check toward the working class ending capitalist exploitation and opening a new stage in human history.”

From New York, Matilde Zimmermann and Arnold Weissberg write, “Thank you for giving us a third opportunity to put our ‘stimulus’ payouts to work building the revolutionary movement.” From Pat Travis in North Carolina: “Enclosed is my contribution toward the ‘stimulus’ capital fund.”

The results of the first week are a good sign!

The contributions go toward augmenting capital, toward long-term plans. The fund will make a big difference in the ability of the SWP to present its program and expand its reach with other fighters on a line of march of the working class to power in the U.S., to join with the toilers of the world to end exploitation and rebuild society based on human solidarity.

You can send your check, made out to the Socialist Workers Party, to the SWP, 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. The *Militant* will feature weekly coverage on the progress of the appeal.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Civil rights battles made working class stronger

From 1956 bus boycott in Montgomery to 1965 Selma-Montgomery march, the ‘Militant’ championed Black rights battles. Overthrow of Jim Crow meant more Blacks in industrial jobs, less racism among working people, boost to struggles of the working class.



Thousands swell March 21, 1965, civil rights protest leaving Selma for Montgomery.

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SWP campaigners collaborate to expand reach in the Midwest



Diane Dormer
Joe Swanson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Lincoln, Nebraska, City Council.

BY ILONA GERSH

LINCOLN, Neb. — “Our party is organizing solidarity with the locked-out Marathon oil workers fight in Minnesota and any other struggles by working people,” Joe Swanson, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Lincoln City Council, told a campaign meeting here March 21. Other speakers included Lance Anton, a railroad conductor and member of the SMART union’s Transportation Division, and Dan Fein, SWP campaign chairman in Illinois.

Anton described the trip he, Swanson and retail worker Diane Dormer made to St. Paul Park, Minnesota, the previous weekend. They went to deliver messages of support to the Marathon workers who are fighting bosses’ demands to contract out work involving hazardous chemicals, and for job cuts and combinations. Safety on the job and for those living near the refinery is the central question in their fight.

“I was blown away by the support the Marathon workers have gotten from teachers, nurses and others,” Anton said. Their union’s “food drive has distributed 1 million pounds of food, not just to families of the locked-out workers, but also to the community.”

“The SWP says no worker has to die,” Swanson told the meeting. “When we unite and fight for a union in our workplace we can have a say over our wages and working condi-

tions. Work can be organized safely if workers and their unions fight to take control of production.”

Fein spoke about the upcoming car caravan in several cities March 28 to protest the U.S. rulers’ decadeslong economic war on Cuba, aimed at overthrowing its socialist revolution.

“By overturning capitalist rule, working people in Cuba ended domination by the exploiting class,” Swanson said. “It’s the clearest example of what is possible. Workers here need to emulate that course.”

During the campaign Swanson has been interviewed on KOLN/KGIN-TV, KFOR radio and is featured in the *Lincoln Journal Star* Voters Guide. The Student Union at the University of Nebraska invited Swanson to address a meeting there March 23.

Four Socialist Workers Party campaigners from Chicago spent the weekend in Lincoln campaigning with Swanson, Anton and others.

“Working people need to run the government,” Jerri Ellington told SWP campaigner Ruth Harris, when Harris knocked on her door in nearby Crete,

SWP launches campaign for mayor in Minneapolis

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

MINNEAPOLIS — At a lively and well-attended public forum here March 20, the Socialist Workers Party launched its campaign of Doug Nelson for mayor of Minneapolis. Nelson and campaign spokesperson Kevin Dwire spoke, addressing the fight of locked-out Marathon Petroleum workers over safety here and the opening of the trial of former cop Derek Chauvin charged with killing George Floyd.

They explained that the campaign is organizing to get out widely in the Twin Cities, throughout Minnesota and elsewhere in the Upper Midwest, in collaboration with SWP campaigners in Chicago and Lincoln, Nebraska. They all worked together over the last few weeks to put Joe Swanson on the ballot for City Council in Lincoln and to build solidarity in the labor movement with the Marathon workers.

Nelson pointed to how Joe Swanson



Militant/Dan Fein
SWP campaign supporter Ruth Harris, left, discusses Amazon warehouse, Marathon refinery labor battles with Jerri Ellington, in Crete, Nebraska, March 20, and need to build solidarity.

“but we are a long way from that.”

“We can speed the day by organizing solidarity with workers’ struggles today,” Harris said, pointing out the need for workers to build their own party, a labor party. Ellington signed up for a six-month subscription and bought a copy of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

On their way to Lincoln, SWP cam-

paginers from Chicago stopped at a large Amazon fulfillment center in Bondurant, Iowa, to talk with workers at the shift change. Many had been following the union organizing drive at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, thinking about whether they could do one too. The team sold 24 copies of the *Militant*.

Over the weekend, eight subscriptions to the *Militant* and 53 single copies were picked up by working people.

had come up from Lincoln last weekend, along with rail worker Lance Anton and furniture store worker Diane Dormer, bringing a solidarity message to the Marathon workers signed by over 100 Nebraskans.

Dwire told the crowd that as part of their campaigning, SWP supporters plan to get the signatures needed to get on the ballot.

Helen Meyers, organizer of the



Militant/David Rosenfeld
SWP candidate for Minneapolis mayor, Doug Nelson, speaks at March 20 campaign forum.

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Henry Dennison, mayor
Rebecca Williamson, City Council

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, as recounted by a central leader of that battle.

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TEAMSTER REBELLION

FARRELL DOBBS

UK cops attack vigil against killing of Sarah Everard

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Some 1,500 people joined a protest vigil in Clapham Common, south London, March 13, following the killing of Sarah Everard, a 33-year-old marketing executive. Demonstrators were attacked by the police who pinned some women to the ground, handcuffed and dragged them away.

Everard was abducted and killed as she walked home here March 3. She was last seen in Clapham Common. Vigils to mark her death were also held in Glasgow, Birmingham and other cities.

“All I wanted was to stand with other women,” Dania Al-Obeid, one of those arrested at the London action, told the BBC. Wayne Couzens, a Metropolitan Police officer, has been charged with Everard’s murder.

“The police action was outrageous,” George McDonald, a GMB union representative, told the *Militant*, on the picket line of striking British Gas workers two days later. Trade unions, civil liberties organizations and many others have denounced the cops’ assault.

The government instructed the police to prevent the vigil in line with its restrictions, in the name of combating the COVID pandemic. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick defended the cops’ actions. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel backed Dick following calls for her to resign.

Everard’s killing and the cops’ assault on the vigil have triggered an outpouring of debate and further protests.

Representatives of the main capitalist parties have led calls for tougher laws, stronger policing and measures that target all men. Jennifer Jones, a Green Party member of the House of Lords, called for a 6 p.m. nationwide curfew be imposed on men. The Labour Party issued demands for misogyny to be declared a “hate crime,” and for cops to arrest those who perpetrate it.

Prime Minister Johnson announced that undercover cops will be deployed as spies in pubs and clubs “to protect women.” His announcement comes just after a government inquiry into a decadeslong covert cop operation that

heard from women duped into sexual relationships with undercover cops. The cops had been snooping on political organizations the women were members of.

Johnson also instructed the police to record all cases where “the victim believed the crimes were motivated by hostility based on the victim’s sex.” This may be incorporated into the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill currently being debated in Parliament. If enacted, the law will put further restrictions on the right to protest and give cops greater powers to arrest demonstrators.

While a number of women’s organizations have protested proposals to beef up the cops and give them more leeway, many also raise proposals that place the blame for violence against women on the “nature” of men in general.

“The road forward is to fight for women’s rights — to choose abortion here and around the world, for access to jobs and equal pay,” Pamela Holmes, the Communist League’s candidate for the London Assembly, told the *Militant*.

Debate over how to answer killings targeting women

Continued from front page
death penalty in Georgia.

These murders provoked a response in Asian communities and a national debate over what Long’s brutal murders reflected and whether “hate crime” laws are the answer.

There has been an increase in threats and attacks against Asians in the U.S. since the advent of the coronavirus. This led many Asian Americans to speak out and protest after the killings. Julian In, 31, originally from Cambodia, carried a sign saying, “My parents didn’t survive the Khmer Rouge for this” at a rally in Atlanta March 20, his first protest. “We need to acknowledge the problem,” he told the *Militant*.

Liberal media and many Democratic Party politicians, in Georgia and the White House, say Long’s actions were racist, aimed at Asians, and demand officials in Georgia file “hate crime” charges. They say working people are



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Demonstration for women’s rights in Parliament Square, London, March 15 protests cop attack on mass vigil in Clapham Common two days earlier after abduction, killing of Sarah Everard.

“The fight for women’s emancipation is in the interests of all working people,” she said.

“But targeting men and looking to the cops is not the solution. The cops are not there to provide protection and justice for working people. They protect the ruling class, its property and values.

“Much of the debate has depicted women as victims. But throughout his-

tory women have provided leadership in working-class struggles,” Holmes said.

“Gains in struggle in recent decades have led to a decline in anti-woman prejudice among working people,” she said, creating better prospects for united struggles by workers. “The fight to end the oppression of women can only be carried through by the working class taking power.”

becoming more racist and reactionary. CNN went so far as to headline its coverage, “White supremacy and hate are haunting Asian Americans.”

In fact, government statistics show that many of the stepped-up attacks against people of Asian background have been carried out by African Americans.

What are the known facts?

There is no evidence Long is a racist or anti-Asian bigot. When he was arrested he told police he was afflicted with an uncontrollable sex addiction, couldn’t stay away from massage spas where he got gratification, and acted to eliminate the “temptation.” It was certainly an attack against women.

Long is a longtime evangelical Christian activist, dating back to public school. He was distraught over the conflict between his religion and his behavior. He twice checked himself into inpatient programs — at Maverick Recovery and HopeQuest Ministry Group — for over six months, but continually relapsed and visited the spas. He repeatedly told fellow patients about his crisis, and his hatred for the pornography industry, Tyler Bayless, who was his roommate in Maverick, told the *Washington Post*.

Bayless said other people at Maverick asked Long if he had a “thing” for Asian women, and he said no.

Long was a regular visitor to the spas he attacked, which were targets of cop investigations into prostitution. Young’s Asian Massage in Cherokee County is one mile from HopeQuest. And all three spas were listed on specialized websites aimed at people who are seeking places where they could get sex.

Former classmates from Sequoyah High School said Long was outraged by racist behavior. When one student was filmed using a racist slur, another told WGCL-TV, “That made him angry, and he said, ‘That’s dumb,’ like pretty much, like, ‘Why are they being racists?’”

Long’s murderous attacks were “horrific and heartbreaking,” Bret Stephens said in his *New York Times* column

March 22. But he also points out that it is wrong for the liberal media and politicians to misuse them to promote a “narrative” of white supremacist violence.

The Democratic Party put its stamp on this “narrative” in a big way. President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris visited Atlanta, calling the killings a “hate crime.” And Biden implied U.S. working people are to blame, saying, “Our silence is complicity.”

“My party will join any action that protests assaults against anyone because they are Asian,” Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta, told the *Militant*. “But we start with the facts, not a ‘narrative.’”

“And we oppose so-called hate crime laws, which are used against what people think, not what they do,” she said. “Laws against ‘hate speech’ don’t stop racism. That requires a mass working-class movement that fights against racist acts, especially the racist practices of the bosses and their government. A powerful example is the massive Black-led movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation.”

— ON THE PICKET LINE —

Manchester bus drivers strike solid after three weeks

MANCHESTER, England — Three weeks in, the strike by 400 drivers at Go North West is going strong and winning solidarity. Dozens of Unite members show up for picket duty, lining union flags along the busy Queens Road. The drivers walked out Feb. 28 to fight a company move to impose longer working hours with no increase in pay.

“An Asian family that lives nearby brings curries they’ve cooked for us every other day,” Paul Jenkins, a Unite shop steward, told the *Militant*. “Another family has brought cakes. Nice ones, too!”

“A teacher at a Jewish school brought a group of kids to learn about trade unions,” Jenkins said.

When Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, visited the picket line March 15 he met a group of bus drivers from Bolton who brought a 500 pound

donation (\$690) from their Unite branch. They told him workers at their depot are following this fight closely.

“The strikers are setting an example which can strengthen the unions for us all,” Clifford said.

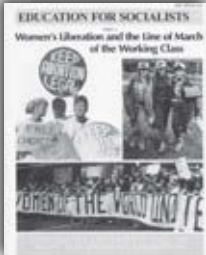
Jenkins told the *Militant* that 11 drivers who initially crossed the picket line have been won over to join the strike. A couple of strikers have gone the other way too, he said.

When workers in other industries learn about the bus bosses’ threat to fire any driver who refused to sign up to new terms, many are outraged. In recent months workers at a number of companies have taken action against the same threat to accept worse conditions or be forced from their jobs. This includes workers at British Gas, who are continuing a series of four-day strikes. The company there set a deadline of March 31 for workers to sign a new contract or face dismissal.

— Ögmundur Jónsson

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Molson brewery workers fight lockout in Toronto

BY PHILIPPE TESSIER

TORONTO — The 300 Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers Local 325 members continue to picket 24/7 in front of the Molson Coors brewery here. They were locked out on Feb. 20 after rejecting the company's contract offer.

The bosses are pushing to institute a third tier with fewer benefits, and with a starting wage only 2 Canadian dollars (\$1.60) above Ontario's minimum of CA\$14 an hour. This is roughly half the top-tier wage now.

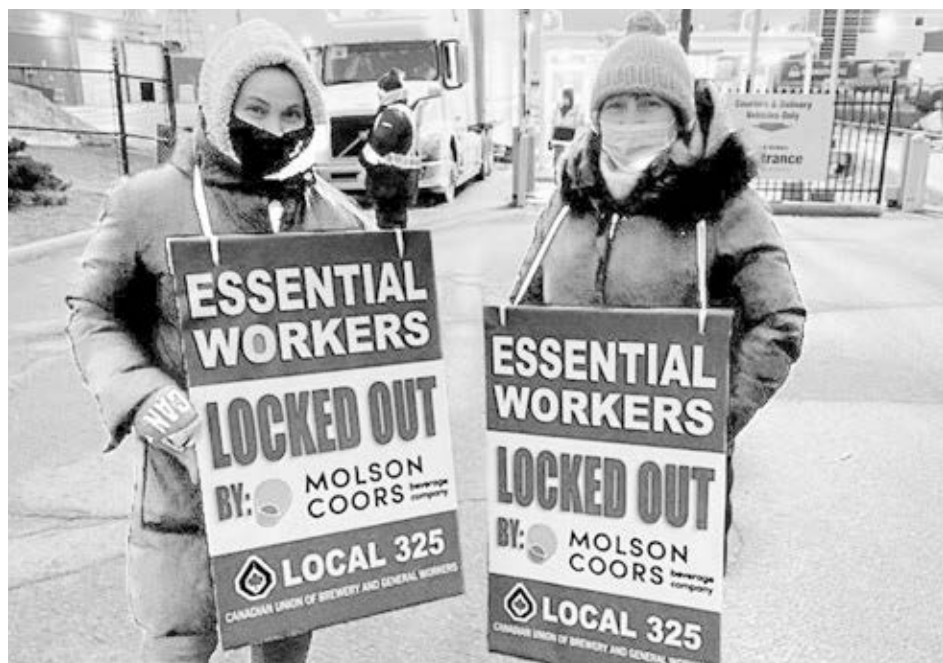
Weeks before the vote, Molson hired 60 temporary workers, telling them to vote for the contract if they wanted to keep a job, Ron Westeneerj, a millwright with 30 years seniority, told the *Militant* on the picket line March 13. "We explained to them, if we lose and you do keep your job, you'll be in the third tier," he said. "Seeing how we got a 70% vote against the contract, the company's effort was in vain."

"They have tiers within tiers. There are different benefits for people who started at different times. It should be the same for everyone," John Moreel, a millwright with 31 years seniority, said.

"They thought they could break the union," said Kevin Galway, chief steward in the brewing department. In 2017 workers won a 46-day strike pushing back concessions demands, including a 7% wage cut.

Workers are also fighting bosses' demands to impose a 12-hour shift operating all seven days on the can line. There would be no rotations, so the same workers would have to work weekends every week. "The younger workers would be forced into this schedule. Molson does it to avoid paying overtime on the weekends. It's unfair," said Moreel.

Area workers are extending support, helping the brewery workers keep up their fight. Two United Steelworkers members brought donuts and coffee to the line while this *Militant*



Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers Local 325

Members of Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers Local 325 picket Molson Coors plant in Toronto. Bosses locked them out Feb. 20 to try and force concession demands.

worker-correspondent was there, and a group of elementary-school teachers joined the picket with their union flags. Members of Sheet Metal Workers and Roofers Local 30, workers from Ontario Power and other union members have brought their union flags and walked the line, too.

You can join the picket line, or send solidarity messages and contributions to Local 325 at 1 Carlingview Dr., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M9W 5E5.

Philippe Tessier is the Communist League's candidate for mayor of St. Laurent in Quebec.

Back Amazon warehouse workers in their fight to win a union!

Continued from front page

disdain for safety on the job. Amazon warehouses have an injury rate of four serious injuries per 100 workers.

"My workday feels like a nine-hour intense workout every day. And they track our every move," Amazon worker Jennifer Bates told the U.S. Senate Budget Committee March 17. She said that with union representation workers could fight for adequate break times, higher wages and protection against victimization by the bosses.

From the outset, the Amazon bosses have been on a no-holds-barred campaign to pressure workers to vote "no."

The BAmazonUnion.org website carries news about the drive and about support from unions, politicians and others. Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, visited here March 17 to bring solidarity. "People are sick and tired of disrespect at work and having to work more than one job to survive," she said.

The National Football League Players Association, Major League Baseball Players Association, and union officials from Peru, Japan, Ethiopia and elsewhere have issued statements of support. And 1,760 members of the Writers Guild of America have signed a petition supporting the organizing drive. Union poultry workers in Alabama — also organized by the RWDSU — have been standing at entrances to the warehouse to explain what they've gained by having a union and encourage workers to vote "yes."

"We are so appreciative of all the support we have received from unionists and others," Joshua Brewer, RWDSU director of organizing, told this worker-correspondent and Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidates Malcolm Jarrett from Pittsburgh and Rachele Fruit from Atlanta when we visited the union hall March 20 as part of a solidarity trip to the area. "It took a giant like Amazon to have all hands on deck, for us all to

come together," Brewer said.

Jarrett delivered letters of support he had gathered from Pittsburgh-area union officials — from Local 400 of the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers; Local 610 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America; Teamsters Local 249, which represents sanitation workers who are currently in a contract fight; as well as signatures from some two dozen Pittsburgh-area Walmart workers, including from the store where he works. "You are setting an example for the rest of the working class in the fight for a more democratic and humane world for all working people around the country," wrote Antwon Gibson, president of United Electrical Workers Local 610.

"SWP candidates use our campaigns to build solidarity with labor battles," Jarrett told Brewer. "This battle to win a union at Amazon deserves the support of all working people."

"We need a union — we need one

real bad," Darray Owens, 25, told Jarrett when he knocked on his door in nearby Hueytown. He has worked at the Dollar General warehouse for four years and is wholeheartedly in support of the Amazon workers' drive to win a union. "It's just chaos where I work," he said. "They time you on everything. We had to work six and seven days a week over the last year. I hope they vote for the union."

Unions make a difference

Antoinette Billingsley, a 31-year-old former autoworker, said the work at her nonunion plant was "cut throat — a union can protect the employees. You have to stand for something and fight for a better life for your children."

Fruit said the SWP campaign explains how workers need to fight to wrest control of production out of the hands of the bosses. "This is the only way to enforce safety and health on the job," she said.

Not everyone we met backs the union-organizing drive, but most did. At a nearby trailer park, Fruit asked 65-year-old grocery store retiree Delores Hardisey what she thought of the Amazon union drive. "I'm all for it," she said. "It's the only way you make any money and get decent benefits." Hardisey said she was a proud member of United Food and Commercial Workers union at the A&P where she had worked.

There is a long tradition of union struggles in this area, especially in the coal mines and steel mills. Many workers have family that have been part of fights in these places.

At the union hall, Brewer said that the RWDSU has received inquiries from Amazon workers in other cities about getting a union. "When this is over we will pull up our signs, and bring them somewhere else to the next fight," he said.

"The ballot counting will be live-streamed so workers can watch it online," he added. "Some 5,800 workers are eligible to vote and the counting will take several days." Messages of support can be sent to midsouth@rwdsu.org.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 8, 1996

DAYTON, Ohio — "We said we would win and we did," was how Rodney Davis put it March 22 as he left a meeting where members of United Auto Workers Local 696 voted overwhelmingly to return to work at two General Motors brake plants here.

Davis was one of 3,000 unionists who struck GM March 5 over the corporation's plans to cut the number of unionized jobs in Dayton by sending work to a nonunion supplier. This outsourcing is part of the drive to restructure U.S. industry and make it more profitable.

Some commentators have described this strike as a critical battle leading up to the national negotiations between the UAW and the Big Three. One thing auto workers can expect as they head into new rounds with the auto giants is what Local 696 members found: when you fight you get support.



April 9, 1971

Civil war has erupted in Pakistan, the result of the national oppression of the Bengali people that has been a central feature of Pakistani life since 1947, when Pakistan was established. The people of East Bengal (Pakistan) and those of West Pakistan are separated by more than the 1,100 miles of Indian territory. Economically and politically East Pakistan is oppressed by West Pakistan.

East Bengali workers and students played an important part in mass mobilizations in 1968 and 1969. Over 1,000,000 people in Dacca, the capital of East Bengal, attended meetings and demanded independence — a Bengali nation (Bengala Desh).

The United States, one of the chief sources of arms to the Pakistani military, will not sit idly by if the Karachi regime is threatened with the loss of East Bengal in a revolutionary development.



April 6, 1946

FREEMPORT, N.Y. — Widespread public pressure has forced Nassau County officials to reverse the kangaroo court "disorderly conduct" conviction of Richard Ferguson, Negro veteran and brother of Charles and Alfonso Ferguson, who were murdered by a Freeport cop on February 5.

This sudden reversal follows the reversal of the Grand Jury's whitewash of Joseph Romeika, the cop.

This brutal and deliberate murder is now officially exposed as one of the most outrageous Jim Crow crimes on record. The murder and subsequent whitewash of the killer stand out starkly as a frame-up and legal lynching in an attempt by public officials to terrorize the Negro population of Freeport. Now the policeman who murdered Charles and Alfonso Ferguson must be brought to trial for his crime.

Protest Myanmar military rule

Continued from front page

the *Irrawaddy* news site. “Not because we are sad or scared of them. But because we are indignant at being bullied and abused.” She vowed, “We will fight the junta with the Civil Disobedience Movement until they fall.”

On Feb. 1, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing seized power and arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the National League for Democracy, which won the November 2020 election in a landslide. Suu Kyi has been the head of the government since 2016. Even though the 2008 Constitution guarantees that 25% of the seats in parliament are appointed by the military command, along with control of key ministries, the generals worried that Suu Kyi would now push for more power.

While Suu Kyi won support for lifting some restrictions on political rights, she also became the most prominent defender of the military in the face of worldwide condemnation of the expulsion of 700,000 Rohingya, a Muslim minority, from Rakhine state in 2017.

“I am not a very strong supporter of Suu Kyi,” Aung Moe Win told the *Militant* at a March 20 New York City demonstration in solidarity with the fight against the military rule. “It blew my mind when she defended what was happening to the Rohingya. But though we come from many different points of view we can come together to fight against the coup.”

Capitalist development in Myanmar

The garment industry has mushroomed in the last 10 years, with its bosses now employing as many as 700,000 workers. The majority of those factories belong to capitalist owners based in China, Singapore, Japan, United Kingdom, U.S., Germany, Holland and other countries. It’s similar for other industries. France-based Total and U.S.-based Chevron oil companies have substantial interests in Myanmar.

Beijing is one of the main suppliers of arms to the Myanmar military, and corporations based in China have entered into joint ventures with the generals and their cronies. Protesters are pressing the Chinese government to denounce the coup. In fact, prior to the coup, Beijing had developed friendly relations with both the generals and the National League for Democracy.

Like the regime in Beijing, other capitalist governments and corporations care little whether it’s the generals or the National League for Democracy that control the government. They want stability to continue to exploit workers in Myanmar, who make wages that are half what workers make in Vietnam and Cambodia.

And they worry about the impact of the movement protesting military rule on workers and farmers in the region, from Bangladesh to Thailand. Working people there also face attacks on political rights and are hit hard by the worldwide capitalist crisis.

Arson attack undermines strike

March 14 arson attacks on several dozen clothing factories in Yangon — mostly owned by Chinese businesses — were used as a pretext by the junta to declare martial law in six nearby working-class neighborhoods, including Hlaing Tharyar, that have been a stronghold of

opposition to the coup. No one has taken credit for the attacks.

The junta went after residents with a vengeance. For several days it was almost impossible to get in or out of the Hlaing Tharyar neighborhood because of a military blockade. People trying to bring food to the besieged residents were arrested, as were volunteer medics treating those wounded in the assault.

Thousands demonstrated March 20 in the Hledan district of Yangon, just a couple miles from Hlaing Tharyar. They listened to speeches, chanted against the junta and sang protest songs for more than three hours. The resilience, determination and courage in the face of the crackdown is shown in daily protests in cities and towns and farming areas across the country.

The regime has relied heavily on army counterinsurgency units to attack unarmed demonstrators. Many of these units are notoriously brutal, including divisions that were involved in massacres of the Rohingya in the west and in fighting against ethnic minority guerrilla groups in other parts of the country.

Like all capitalist armies, Myanmar’s rank-and-file soldiers are largely drawn from among workers and farmers. *Ir-*

Cuban farmers, students expand support to medical centers

BY RÓGER CALERO

Many farmers in Cuba are organizing to donate fresh produce to social institutions as part of the battle by the Cuban people and their revolutionary government against the COVID-19 pandemic and the U.S. rulers’ embargo. It’s a re-affirmation both of the socialist revolution’s principle that no one is left on their own and the determination by Cuban farmers to defend their social, economic and political conquests.

Through the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), farmers and farm cooperatives have for decades made regular donations of fruits and vegetables to local hospitals, maternity homes, child care centers and homes serving the elderly. Now, they are expanding that solidarity to patients and staff of COVID-19 isolation and treatment centers, units that have been set up throughout the country since the pandemic began early last year.

“Our cooperative has always distinguished itself by making these donations. Now we’re just increasing it,” farmer Jorge Viera from Camagüey province said as he was unloading crates of vegetables and bunches of plantains. These acts of solidarity are widespread.

Farmers are responding to ANAP’s call to increase food production. This is part of efforts by the revolutionary government and Cuba’s mass organizations to alleviate the financial constraints imposed by Washington’s economic, commercial and financial war against Cuba. These sanctions come on top of shutdowns of production and tourism due to the coronavirus that together sharply reduce access to hard currency necessary for food imports and other supplies.

Founded in May 1961, ANAP is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Following the 1959 triumph of the revolutionary struggle led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, Cuban peasants in their millions drove a land reform that expropriated the capitalist



The Irrawaddy/Phyo Min Ko

Workers, students, Buddhist monks in Ye-U in Myanmar’s Sagaing region protest March 22. Inset, deserted streets of Yangon during March 24 “silent strike,” day before national protest called against military rule. “Strongest storm comes after the silence,” said protest leader.

rawaddy reported in 2009 that soldiers who are dismissed from the army due to illness or injuries are left on their own, with little or no benefits.

A small number of soldiers, appalled

at the killing of unarmed protesters, have abandoned their posts.

James Khyne in Houston contributed to this article.

landowners, nationalized the land and turned it over to those who work it. This revolutionary act guaranteed farmers the right to till the land without fear of foreclosure. At the same time, the new workers and farmers government provided low-interest loans, technical assistance and guaranteed prices for their crops. These are all conquests farmers in Cuba continue to use and defend.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Cuban leadership has organized to save as many lives as possible. They have dedicated enormous resources and mobilized working people to contain its spread, making Cuba one of the countries with the lowest rate of deaths from COVID-19 in the world. It’s the opposite of what the U.S. capitalist rulers have done, which is based on preserving and relying on their profit-driven system, despite the enormous cost for working people.

As part the battle, Cuban authorities and volunteers from mass organizations do daily house visits to check on everyone’s health. In addition, dozens of special centers have been opened on university campuses where those who may have been exposed to the disease can isolate and get special medical attention.

“My family and I were admitted to an isolation center,” said Edey Suárez, a farmer in Cienfuegos province. “There I was able to appreciate the effort the country is making against the epidemic. I came out with greater determination to find solutions and to contribute,” he said.

No one left on their own

Led by the Union of Young Communists and the Federation of University Students, contingents of students have volunteered to help in the centers. They do everything from house cleaning and laundry to delivering meals to patients in their rooms. They also provide company, explain the testing procedures and help with computer applications that track each patient’s health.

They work alongside medical students who, in turn, are guided by teams of doctors and nurses who visit the patients. When a suspected case turns out positive, the patient is immediately referred to a more specialized facility for early treatment.

One of these centers is at the University of Information Sciences in Havana. The student dormitories there can accommodate 800 people, and the campus medical clinic was rapidly converted into a 170-bed hospital.

“It was an outstanding job,” said Dr. Carlos Alberto Martínez, provincial health director in Havana. “It shows what’s possible when we do what is necessary to protect the health of our people in a battle like the one we’re waging.” The center is staffed by 110 health care workers, who bring the bed-to-worker ratio to less than two — a figure unknown in any hospital in the United States.

The center opened in April last year, around the commemoration of the anniversary of the Cuban people’s victory over the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion organized by Washington. The counterrevolutionaries were defeated by popular militias and armed forces, dealing a crushing blow to the U.S. rulers and the Cuban landlords and capitalists, who had hoped to reclaim power and take back their former factories and haciendas.

“We come from that same youth. The ideals are the same,” said Silvano Merced, a volunteer, pointing to the example of those who fought against the invasion. He and the others are committed to the battle today in defense of the revolution.

The young volunteers have won the admiration of both the medical personnel and the patients. They treat patients as fellow human beings.

“We don’t have the training the health care staff has. But we have the same humane intentions,” said Yanio Hernández, a professor volunteering at the center along with the students.

Workers jobs

Continued from front page
wages and working conditions. While most of Biden’s “Build Back Better” plan is still vague, it’s clear that it’s built on a view of the economy that sees a big shift to a tech-driven world. It sees mining, steel mills, auto plants and similar industries, and the jobs they produced, being consigned to the dustbin of history. Instead, it views big tech and service industries as the future. Workers will need to be “refitted” to fit in. So part of their plan is college and retraining subsidies.

Transport Secretary Pete Buttigieg highlighted the social engineering the government’s “green” program will be built on in a March 18 speech. While the infrastructure package will include some road repairs, he said, “there are some things that need to be reduced ... sometimes roads need to go on a diet.”

The liberals and the meritocratic “social planners” they rely on aim to strengthen the capitalist state to push workers to “do the right thing.” They view working people as objects to be administered, rather than people who are not only capable of fighting to



Steelworkers rally at ATI plant in Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, March 16 to protest bosses’ contract demands that include no pay rise, deeper two-tier divisions, more subcontracting and cuts in health care and retirement. Members of United Steelworkers at nine mills voted to authorize strike earlier this month.

change the conditions the bosses and their government impose on us, but to transform ourselves and take political power into our own hands.

As for the character of their thinking on “infrastructure,” Buttigieg said, “I think the pothole has become a symbol of the bigger needs we have.”

Whatever efforts the administration includes to actually improve roads and bridges, it will primarily be aimed at advancing the competitive position of U.S. capitalists against their rivals, a point Biden made to senators last month. Without repairing infrastructure, the Chinese government will “eat our lunch,” he said.

Like every president before him, Biden’s goal is to defend U.S. bosses’ ability to compete against their rivals and to maximize their profits. The administration is maintaining Washington’s threats against Beijing, including deploying a guided missile destroyer to the South China Sea last month.

Biden has yet to offer proposals for funding his plan, though administration figures say tax hikes are inevitable. Some Democrats favor an onerous vehicle-miles tax, currently being piloted in Utah and Oregon. As vehicles today burn fuel more efficiently, and with their dreams of a new era of electric cars, government revenue from gasoline taxes is dropping. The Vehicle Mile Traveled plan would require installing a monitoring device in every vehicle to

track every trip drivers make, then inform the government of the mileage to suck more taxes out of working people.

Key question is jobs

None of the proposals under discussion start from the key question facing the working class — jobs. Despite an easing of some lockdowns, the government reported March 18 that 770,000 workers filed new unemployment claims last week, an increase of 45,000 from the week before. At least 9.5 million more workers remain out of a job than a year ago.

With rising competition among workers for jobs, bosses are stepping up efforts to boost profits at workers’ expense. Some 1,300 Steelworkers at Allegheny Technologies

Inc. voted to authorize a strike earlier this month when bosses there demanded they sign a new contract that would deepen divisions among workers, weaken their union and freeze wages.

“Socialist Workers Party candidates are building support for union struggles,” Malcolm Jarrett, the party’s candidate for Pittsburgh mayor, told the *Militant*. Jarrett just returned from Alabama, where he delivered solidarity messages from Pittsburgh area unionists to workers fighting for a union at Amazon’s Bessemer fulfillment center.

In contrast to Biden’s schemes, “the SWP campaign urges workers and our unions to fight for a federally funded public works program to put millions back to work at union-scale pay *now*, building the hospitals, homes, child care and infrastructure we need,” Jarrett said.

“And on the job we need to fight to take control of production out of the bosses’ hands,” Jarrett said. “Only then can workers and our unions begin to enforce safety on the job and establish much-needed protection of the environment from the bosses’ contamination of the earth, air and waters.”

Turkish government moves to ban pro-Kurdish HDP



Reuters/Sertac Kayar

The authoritarian government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey moved to ban the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), the nation’s third-largest and chief opposition party, March 18.

The HDP was formed in 2012 to represent the fight for national rights of the Kurdish people in Turkey, but has won broader support for its opposition to the Erdogan regime’s attacks on political and social rights.

There are over 30 million Kurds across Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, roughly half in Turkey alone. The Kurdish people are the largest national-ity worldwide without their own state.

The government filed a case with the Constitutional Court calling for dissolving the HDP, claiming it was attempting to “disrupt and eliminate” the unity of the Turkish state. It also seeks to ban 600 HDP members from engaging in politics for five years.

Outraged by this move, millions of Kurds who were celebrating the Newroz spring festival March 20 turned these events into acts of protest. Above, March 21 action in Diyarbakir. The government knows that “closing the HDP will not be the solution,” Abbas Mendi told Reuters at the Newroz celebration in Istanbul. “You can close a party but you can’t close people’s minds.”

In the 2018 election, the HDP won 11.7% of the vote, or nearly 6 million votes, electing dozens of members to parliament.

Over the past several years Turkish authorities have launched deadly attacks in the Kurdish region, and military assaults on Kurds in Syria and Iraq. They framed up leaders of the HDP, including former co-chairs Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag, who have been imprisoned since November 2016. From 1990 every effort by Kurds to form their own political party to vie in the elections has been disbanded by the Turkish regime.

“Not having been able to overpower HDP ideologically, politically or at the ballot box,” the party said in a statement, “they are now aiming to eliminate HDP from democratic politics by means of the judiciary. Their aggressiveness originates from their deep fear.”

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

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‘We’re living in revolutionary times, there has to be change’

The French edition of Malcolm X Talks to Young People is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. In the last year of his life, Malcolm emerged as the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution. The main excerpt is from his speech “See for Yourself, Listen for Yourself, Think for Yourself,” given Jan. 1, 1965, in Harlem to a group of high school youth from McComb, Mississippi, who had been engaged in civil rights battles there, including registering Blacks to vote in 1964. They had come to New York at the invitation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which had gone to McComb to help launch the right-to-vote effort. The second piece is the conclusion of “Any Means Necessary to Bring About Freedom,” a speech to students at Oxford University in England on Dec. 4, 1964. Copyright © 2011. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY MALCOLM X

[O]ne of the first things I think young people, especially nowadays, should learn how to do is see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself. But if you form the habit of going by what you hear others say about someone, or going by what others think about someone, instead of



Malcolm X talks to students at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Feb. 3, 1965. Two months earlier at Oxford University in the U.K. he said, “I will join with anyone, I don’t care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.”

going and searching that thing out for yourself and seeing for yourself, you’ll be walking west when you think you’re going east, and you’ll be walking east when you think you’re going west. So this generation, especially of our people, have a burden upon themselves, more so than at any other time in history. The most important thing we can learn how to do today is think for ourselves.

It’s good to keep wide-open ears and listen to what everybody else has to say, but when you come to make a decision, you have to weigh all of what you’ve heard on its own, and place it where it belongs, and then come to a decision for yourself. You’ll never regret it. But if you form the habit of taking what someone else says about a thing without checking it out for yourself, you’ll find that other people will have you hating your own friends and loving your enemies. This is one of the things that our people are beginning to learn today — that it is very important to think out a situation for yourself. If you don’t do it, then you’ll always be maneuvered into actually — You’ll never fight your enemies, but you will find yourself fighting your own self. ...

Now the point that I’m making is this: Never at any time in the history of our people in this country have we made advances or advancement, or made progress in any way just based upon the internal good will of this country, or based upon the internal activity of this

country. We have only made advancement in this country when this country was under pressure from forces above and beyond its control. Because the internal moral consciousness of this country is bankrupt. It hasn’t existed since they first brought us over here and made slaves out of us. They trick up on a conversation and make it appear that they have our good interests at heart. But when you study it, every time, no matter how many steps they take us forward, it’s like we’re standing on a — what do you call that thing? — a treadmill. The treadmill is moving backwards faster than we’re able to go forward in this direction. We’re not even standing still — we’re walking forward, at the same time we’re going backward. ...

So when we saw that we were up against a hopeless battle internally, we saw the necessity of getting allies at the world level or from abroad, from all over the world. And so immediately we realized that as long as the struggle was a civil rights struggle, was under the jurisdiction of the United States, we would have no real allies or real support. We decided that the only way to make the problem rise to the level where we could get world support was to take it away from the civil rights label, and put in the human rights label. ...

Now, you’ve lived in Mississippi long enough to know what the language of the Ku Klux Klan is. They only know one language. If you come

up with another language, you don’t communicate. You’ve got to be able to speak the same language they speak, whether you’re in Mississippi, New York City, or Alabama, or California, or anywhere else. When you develop or mature to the point where you can speak another man’s language on his level, that man gets the point. That’s the only time he gets the point. You can’t talk peace to a person who doesn’t know what peace means. You can’t talk love to a person who doesn’t know what love means. And you can’t talk any form of nonviolence to a person who doesn’t believe in nonviolence. Why, you’re wasting your time.

So I think in 1965 — whether you like it, or I like it, or we like it, or they like it, or not — you will see that there is a generation of Black people born in this country who become mature to the point where they feel that they have no more business being asked to take a peaceful approach than anybody else takes, unless everybody’s going to take a peaceful approach.

So we here in the Organization of Afro-American Unity, we’re with the struggle in Mississippi 1,000 percent. We’re with the efforts to register our people in Mississippi to vote 1,000 percent. But we do not go along with anybody telling us to help non-violently. We think if the government says that Negroes have a right to vote, and then when Negroes go out to vote some kind of Ku Klux Klan is going to put them in the river, and the government doesn’t do anything about it, it’s time for us to organize and band together and equip ourselves and qualify ourselves to protect ourselves. [Applause] And once you can protect yourself, you don’t have to worry about being hurt.



[I]n my opinion the young generation of whites, Blacks, browns, whatever else there is — you’re living at a time of extremism, a time of revolution, a time when there’s got to be a change. People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built, and the only way it’s going to be built is with extreme methods. And I for one will join in with anyone, I don’t care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth.

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—SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT—

Working-class road to end women’s oppression

Statement by Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Manhattan Borough president, March 24.

The fight to defend women’s rights and end forever the second-class status of women is part and parcel of the working class charting a course to unite and take political power into our own hands.

Millions are outraged at violence targeting women, from the murderous assaults at Atlanta massage parlors to London cops attacking women attending a vigil for a woman killed there. But it is only by advancing on a course to eliminate the source of women’s oppression that such violence can be ended.

Social relations born out of the emergence of private property and class society thousands of years ago are the roots of women’s subjugation, not “human nature” or men.

“If class society and the accompanying subordinate status of women is only a stage of human history, one that arose at a certain historical juncture for specific reasons, then it can be eliminated,” writes Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, in her introduction to Pathfinder’s *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*.

The massive expansion of women’s participation in the workforce and fights for women’s rights have strengthened working people; increased the centrality of the fight for women’s emancipation; and brought forward new leaders for today’s working-class battles.

The capitalist rulers benefit from the lower value of women’s labor power and try to perpetuate it — while workers are drawn to stand with all those oppressed and exploited by capital to unify our ranks to fight to raise wages and improve conditions for all workers.

Central to the fight for women’s rights is the fight for unrestricted family planning, including the right to safe and secure abortion. This is essential for women to plan all aspects of their lives, including whether or when to bear a child. Protests in the streets, backed by our unions, are needed to defend access to abortion.

Violence against women can’t be ended by strengthening the bosses’ cops and courts, or hate laws that make what people think a crime. Only by deepening struggles for equal rights for women and on other crucial fronts can working people and social relations be transformed. These struggles can lead to the forging of a working-class party to lead millions of the exploited to take power into our own hands and open the door to women’s emancipation.

By overturning capitalist rule, workers and farmers in Cuba showed this is possible. Led by Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement, the women and men taking part in that historic struggle changed themselves and changed history. Conquering power gives workers and farmers the most powerful tool possible to drive forward in ending centuries of women’s oppression and opening the door to the liberation of all humanity.

This is a future to win. Join us!

Italy: Amazon workers strike over conditions

BY JANET POST

Thousands of Amazon workers across Italy struck for 24 hours March 22 after talks over onerous schedules and working conditions for delivery workers broke down. This was the first national strike against Amazon there, involving warehouse workers, drivers and those at distribution hubs. There are 9,500 full-time workers at Amazon hubs in Italy and 30,000 at Amazon-contracted delivery service providers.

The full-time workers are members of the transport division of three national unions: Italian General Confederation of Labor (FILT-CGIL); Italian Confederation of Workers’ Unions (FIT-CSIL) and Italian Labor Union (UIL). Amazon’s third-party delivery services are represented by Assoespressi, a bosses’ association.

The unions said over 75% of the workers joined the strike. They’re demanding contract improvements in workloads, overly long workweeks, shift times, lunch vouchers, bonuses and travel payments.

“We’re not asking for pay rises right now, but for a more humane working schedule,” FIT-CISL Secretary General Salvatore Pellicchia told Reuters. “These people make at least 100 stops a day, each involving not one but often two or three parcel deliveries.”

Amazon has been unwilling to hold discussions with the unions. The bosses say their refusal is because their logistics operations include third-party delivery service providers. They argue the unions should negotiate directly with Assoespressi and the delivery providers, not with Amazon. The unions did meet with Assoespressi, but the talks collapsed.

Amazon workers in Italy have stood up to the company before. Amazon drivers struck the company in Vigonza Feb. 16 over speedup, wages and lack of COVID-19 protection.

In 2017 Amazon workers struck the biggest facility in Italy, the Castel San Giovanni hub, over wages, better working conditions and for permanent jobs. Of the 4,000 workers there, more than half are part time.

—LETTERS—

A life building the SWP

Greg Preston, a longtime supporter of the Socialist Workers Party who lived in Huntersville, North Carolina, died Feb. 18, a few days after suffering a heart attack. He had just turned 73.

Preston, born in Lincoln, Nebraska, was drafted in 1967 and joined the Air Force. By the time he left four years later his experiences had shaken up his beliefs.

In 1974 he moved to Seattle and got a job at Boeing, where he met Socialist Workers Party members. He started reading the *Militant* and decided to join the communist movement. A few years later Preston moved to Dallas to help build the new party branch there. In 1983 he was the SWP candidate for Dallas mayor and fought, with union backing, for his right to distribute socialist campaign literature to co-workers on the job. He took assignments helping to build party branches around the coun-

try, including in St. Louis, Baltimore, and Omaha, Nebraska.

Later he went to New York City to help work on the Pathfinder Mural. From 1987 to 1989 some 80 artists, including Preston, from 20 countries painted a huge mural that covered the south wall of the building where Pathfinder books and the *Militant* were printed.

The mural depicted a large printing press turning out literature surrounded by images of revolutionary fighters and historical working-class battles. Among other portraits, Preston helped paint the

young “breaker boys” across the bottom of the mural who used to work in U.S. coal mines until workers’ struggles finally forced an end to child labor.

In the mid-90s he moved to North Carolina and became a supporter of the party and a member of the Print Project, which helps produce Pathfinder books. He remained a contributor to the party and often opened his home for social events to help raise money for the SWP.

Last fall, Preston decided to raise his monthly contribution to the party. He was inspired, he said, by the SWP’s response to the pandemic — not to shut down and “go virtual,” as so many other organizations did, but to continue campaigning as widely as possible among working people with the *Militant* and Pathfinder books and bringing solidarity to any resistance by the toilers to this inhuman, crisis-ridden capitalist system.

Susan LaMont
Atlanta, Georgia

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. Send a check or money order payable to the ‘Militant’ and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

Oregon ranchers fight government retaliation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

On Feb. 26 the Joseph Biden administration cancelled a permit granted to eastern Oregon ranchers Dwight Hammond and his son Steven to graze their cattle on federal land. This is the latest in a long series of moves by government officials to harass the Hammonds and other ranchers who depend on access to public lands to earn their livelihood.

Federal government agencies control more than half of the land in Oregon, and 75% in Harney County where the Hammonds live.

The Bureau of Land Management had proposed granting the Hammonds a new grazing permit Dec. 31, citing their “extensive historic use” of the allotments and what the federal agency characterized as their “past proper use of rangeland resources.” The measure was enacted by the Donald Trump administration Jan. 19, the day before he left office.

In an effort to block this, the Western Watersheds Project and three other environmental groups sued the BLM Feb. 25. They claimed they weren’t given the required 15 days to protest the ruling, even though 20 days had passed since the administration publicly posted its preliminary decision online.

A day later, Laura Daniel-Davis, Biden’s Department of Interior assistant secretary for land and mineral management, reversed the Hammonds’ grazing permit.

The Hammonds have been subjected to onerous government regulations and harassment for many years. They also became the targets of a campaign of slander and lies from liberals and middle-class radicals who view ranchers as dangerous and reactionary.

In June 2010 federal officials brought frame-up charges against them for “maliciously damaging” U.S. property in two backfires. In 2001 and 2006 they had set two controlled fires on their ranch, one to protect against an approaching wildfire, a time-tested fire-fighting technique, and the other to destroy invasive juniper growth. These fires leaked onto federal land, affecting 140 acres.

The Hammonds’ were hounded and prosecuted under the William Clinton administration’s 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which included a mandatory five-year prison sentence. The judge, however, set a shorter sentence, failing to see what justified such a long incarceration. The Obama administration appealed, demanding the full five years. The Hammonds also were fined \$400,000.

“I’m sorry to see this happen to the Hammonds,” Ruth Danielsen, a neighbor of the family, told the *Militant* in a phone interview March 19. “I’m amazed at their resilience to continue to stay in there.

“Some people claim grazing causes damage to the environment,” she said. “This is not the case.” Cows chewing forage “helps to control wildfires.”

In a Feb. 26 statement, the Oregon Farm Bureau condemned the federal government’s action: “It is fundamentally unfair to continually subject this family to ever-changing regulatory whims, and in the process, jeopardize their livelihood, proper rangeland management, and ability to fully utilize their private lands.

“The Hammonds’ permit should be restored, and the family should be allowed to move forward with their lives in peace.”

Long fight to vindicate Hammonds

Growing anger over the discrimination and abuse by federal government agencies against the Hammonds gained national attention when a group of armed protesters, led by rancher Ryan Bundy and his brother Ammon, occupied the headquarters of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge for 41 days in early 2016.

The Bundys were arrested and prosecuted for their actions, but were acquitted, showing working people’s disdain for the government’s attacks on the ranchers.

Former President Donald Trump pardoned the Hammonds in 2018 and they applied for the new grazing permit. But they immediately ran into roadblocks like they’re dealing with today. After a grazing permit was granted to them by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in early 2019, environmental groups sued him and the BLM. A federal judge at the end of the year revoked the Hammonds’ permit, claiming Zinke’s action was an “abuse of discretion.”